

Venue:
Community

Goal:
Eliminate Exposure
to Secondhand Smoke

Activity:
C4.03 Policy
Education – Public
Venues & Worksites



Contact Information:
Jennifer Polello
Organization:
Spokane Regional
Health District
Phone:
(509) 324-1452
Email:
JMPolello@spokanecounty.org



- **Population (Census 2000): 417,939**
- **Total Households (Census 2000): 163,611**
- **Adult Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (BRFSS/ATS 2003): 24 percent**
- **Estimated Number of Adult Cigarette Smokers (DOH 2004): 74,100**
- **Number of Students (OSPI 2003): 72,551**
- **Eighth Grade Cigarette Smoking Prevalence (HYS 2002): 10 percent**

Tobacco-Free Zones in the City of Spokane

Project Description

The Spokane Regional Health District worked with city organizations to establish tobacco-free zones in parks where children are commonly present. The effort in the City of Spokane has stimulated the adoption of tobacco-free policies in other areas of the county.



Inputs Rationale

- The implementation of tobacco-free parks in areas where children play allows for the creation of a healthy and positive environment for children. Studies have shown that children exposed to adults who enact healthy behaviors are likely to be socialized in similar ways. Children develop their own repertoire by modeling the behavior of influential adults (Rimal, 2003).
- Tobacco-free zones in parks where children play are a positive step towards increasing healthy social norms within a community. The implementation of tobacco-free zones would not only heighten the appeal of our parks, but also would assist in the reduction of the number of current smokers and protect our youth from the dangers of tobacco by providing a safe and healthy environment.
- The implementation of tobacco-free zones also proves to uphold the Youth Tobacco Possession Law (RCW 70.155) by limiting the accessibility of youth to smoke in public places.

Target Audience
• Primary: Public policymakers
• Secondary: Park visitors

Resources

- Staff**
- One tobacco program staff member and other Spokane Regional Health District secondhand smoke task force members were involved in the project.
- Funding**
- State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program funds were used.
- Partnerships**
- The City of Spokane's Parks Board, Land Committee, Neighborhood Councils, and the Parks Foundation, Spokane Teens Against Tobacco

Activities

1. The Spokane health district met with city groups including the Park Board, Land Committee, Neighborhood Councils, and the Park Foundation to generate support for smoke-free parks. Three community forums solicited public comments on the project, which then were presented to the city's Park Board.
2. A large public education campaign was conducted to promote the importance of the zones. Coalition members and staff attended community events to hand out information, Spokane Teens Against Tobacco held rallies in city parks to gain public support, and the health district created two PowerPoint presentations to increase community awareness on the benefits of smoke-free zones.
3. The health district surveyed Spokane County residents to determine their support for tobacco-free parks.
4. A six-month pilot program to establish tobacco-free zones in parks was approved by the city. Tobacco-free zones are limited to playgrounds, park structures, skate parks, formal garden areas, and swimming and wade pool areas. The ban uses community policing, meaning signs are posted and it is up to park users to obey the signs.
5. When the pilot ended in December 2003, the city and community groups agreed that the policies were beneficial. The formal adoption process currently is underway.

Outputs

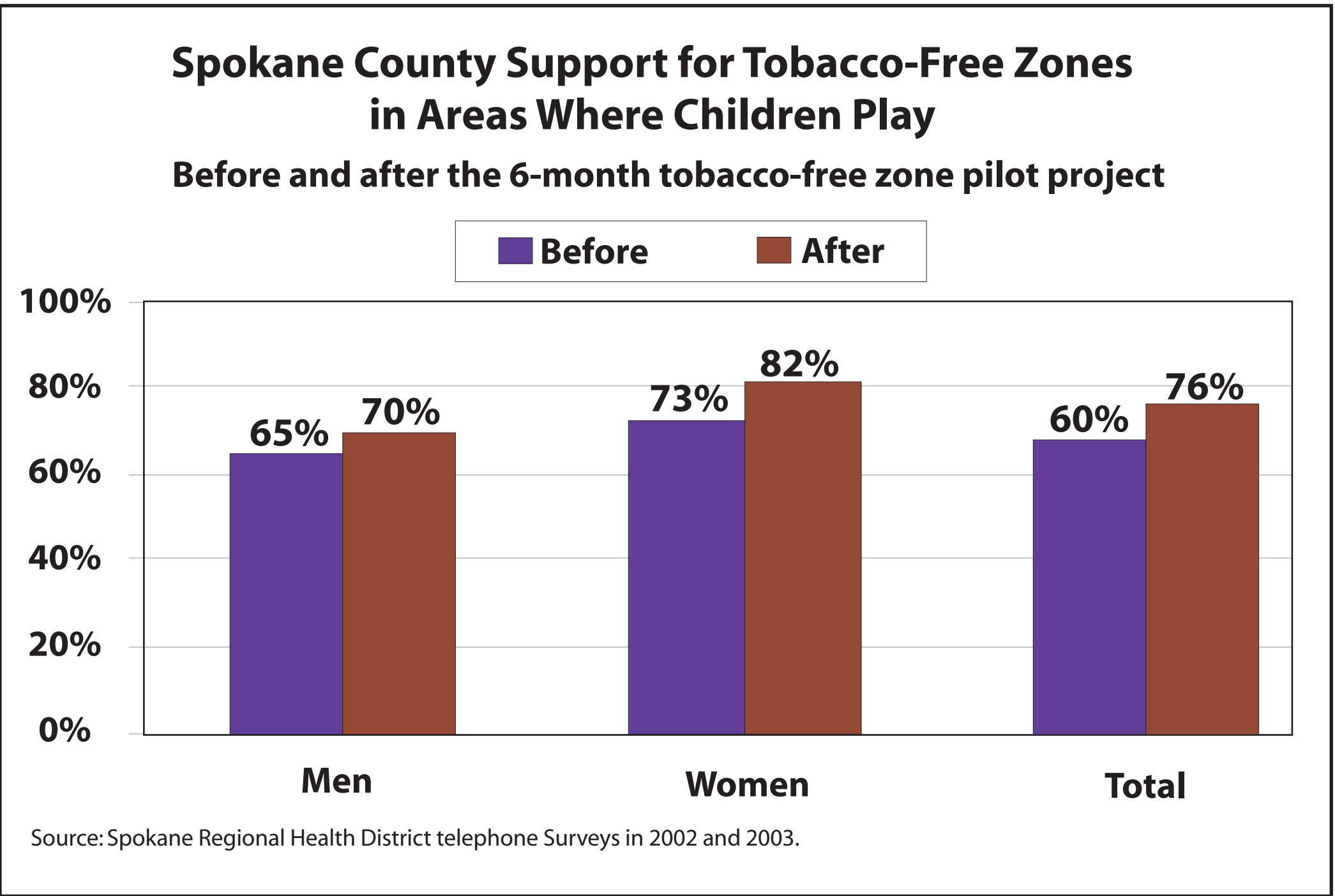
1. Eighty-eight parks in the City of Spokane have tobacco-free zones. No problems with the voluntary nature of the ban's enforcement have been reported.
2. Following the City of Spokane's implementation of the tobacco-free zone park pilot project, many other local agencies and communities implemented tobacco-free zones as a permanent policy change.
 - In July 2003, the YMCA of the Inland Northwest implemented tobacco-free zones as an organizational policy.
 - In February 2004, Sports USA in the Spokane Valley adopted a tobacco-free policy for players, coaches, staff, and spectators. Tobacco-free zones will be posted on the building's exterior and on the playgrounds and ball fields.
 - The City of Liberty Lake agreed to implement tobacco-free zones in their community.
 - In spring 2004, Pavilion Park will display tobacco-free zones in areas where children play as well as around the popular picnic shelter.
 - Tobacco-free zones also have worked well at the Spokane County Interstate Fair. The number of tobacco-free zones has increased at the fair.
3. The Spokane Regional Health District wrote a report, *The Importance of Tobacco Free Zones in Areas Where Children and Families Recreate*, for the City of Spokane's Park and Recreation Department and Parks Board. The report recommends that the City of Spokane continue the tobacco-free zone project, describes how tobacco-free zones can provide positive role modeling for youth, lists the number of organizations implementing policies, and details the results of the survey.

Evaluation

- Strategic Research conducted a random telephone survey of 400 Spokane County residents in March 2002, and again in December 2003. The surveys were conducted before the implementation of the Tobacco Free Zone Park Pilot Project and again following the implementation of the project.

The surveys found that 20.8 percent of the population currently smokes cigarettes, 5 percent smoke cigars, 2 percent chew tobacco, and 1.5 percent smoke pipes. These results closely mirror other state and national data for tobacco users in our county. According to the state Department of Health, about one in five people in Spokane County still uses some type of tobacco. Based on available data, there is no significant difference between tobacco use in Spokane County and the rest of the state (DOH, 2003).
- After the six-month, smoke-free zone pilot there was an increase in the number of favorable responses towards smoke-free zones where children play. The increase was seen among all county residents and also in both male and female respondents.

- Results from a statewide telephone survey also found just over half of Spokane County residents believe smoking should be completely banned in outdoor public areas where children may be present (52 percent \pm 6 percent, ATS 2003 preliminary data). Spokane County residents are slightly less supportive than other state residents (57 percent \pm 2 percent, $p=0.05$).
- Favorable findings also were evident in a convenience sample survey of fair participants. The 2001 survey conducted by the Spokane Regional Health District's Assessment Center revealed that 87.5 percent of respondents with children living in the home would support a tobacco-free park policy, while 80.9 percent of respondents without children in the home would support such a policy (SRHD, 2001).



Lessons Learned

- Be persistent. Originally we wanted to establish tobacco-free zones in all parks and adopt policies requiring all youth and adult recreation programs to be completely tobacco-free throughout the entire county. Our proposal was unanimously approved by the County Park Advisory Board but was rejected by the Spokane County Commissioners. Even though this was disappointing, we continued to work with the City of Spokane to get the tobacco-free zone policies in place. Now that the city policies have been successful, we have a better chance of getting policies adopted countywide.
- Focusing on the importance of providing a positive and healthy environment for the children (positive role modeling) was a more effective message than the harm of secondhand smoke. There is a great deal of research in this area and it was an easier argument for us to win.